

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1, 14, 19 and 20 are amended for the Examiner's consideration and claim 21 is added. The above amendments and new claim are fully supported by the specification and, in particular, Fig. 6. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 20 contains allowable subject matter and would be allowed if presented in independent form. As claim 20 has been presented in independent form, Applicants respectfully request that at least claim 20 be indicated to be allowed. Moreover, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph. This rejection is believed to be moot.

Claim 14 is amended in order to clarify that the annular valve portion 34a faces in a forward direction and that it is integrally formed with the expansion cylinder portion. Such features are fully supported in Fig. 6.

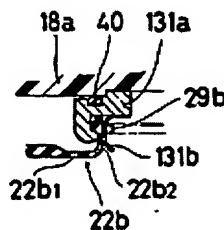
Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 14 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,190,125 to SUZUKI et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the rejection, the Examiner asserts that Figure 4 of SUZUKI shows pertinent features related to the claimed invention. For example, the Examiner is of the opinion that Figure 4 of SUZUKI shows an annular recess portion 131a and an annular protruding portion 131b of the pair of cylinder holding portions are elastically engaged with each other, noting spring 29b. This does not appear to be accurate as described with reference to Figure 4, reproduced below.

Fig. 4



As shown in Figure 4, a circular groove is formed on the outer circumference of the first retainer 131a and an O-ring 40 is installed on the circular groove provided in the first retainer 131a. The first retainer 131a is secured in an air-tight manner to the cylindrical portion 18a of the piston body 18 through the O-ring 40 by pressing. Also, Figure 4 shows a circular ring 131b, provided as a second retainer, secured to the inner circumference of the tubular portion of the first retainer 131a by pressing. However, the first retainer 131a does not include a protruding part, as recited in the

claimed invention, nor does the circular ring 131b include a recessed portion, as recited in the claimed invention.

By way of background, Fig. 6 of the instant application shows an annular recess portion 50 arranged on an outer cylindrical circumferential surface of member 35B and an annular protruding portion 51 arranged on an inner circumferential cylindrical surface of connecting portion 35Ac of member 35A. The connecting portion 35Ac extends into an annular recess of the member 35B which has an open forward end.

More specifically, claim 1 recites, for example, that the attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions formed in a pair of valve holders attached to the valve cylinder and engaging an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder. While it is true that Fig. 4 of SUZUKI shows engagement between portion 131a and an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder 18a, portion 131b does not engage with the inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder 18a. To the contrary, Fig. 4 of SUZUKI merely provides engagement between the portion 131b and an inner circumferential surface of portion 131a and not the valve cylinder 18a. Accordingly, the Examiner must acknowledge that Fig. 4 of SUZUKI fails to disclose, or even suggest, an arrangement wherein a pair of valve holders engages with an inner circumferential face of the valve cylinder.

Additionally claim 19 recites, for example, that the attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions formed in a front valve holder and a rear valve holder, the front valve holder including a connecting portion

that extends into a recess of the rear valve holder having a forward facing open end, whereby the connecting portion is positioned between the valve cylinder and an engaging portion of the rear valve holder. In contrast, Figure 4 of SUZUKI a rear valve holder without a recess, much less, one having a forward facing open end and/or one which receives therein a connecting portion of the front valve holder.

Furthermore, Applicants submit that the configuration of SUZUKI is, by far, more difficult to manufacture and assemble than that of the claimed invention. For example, the recess and protruding portion of the claimed invention allow an easy and simple "snap-like" fit mating, which is elastically engaged. The configuration of the claimed invention also uses less material, which reduces costs. Additionally, the mating of the claimed invention is very secure, used in combination with the remaining features of the claimed invention. In contrast, the configuration of SUZUKI includes more material and would thus be more costly to manufacture. Also, this configuration clearly shows that both of the rings 131a and 131b have smooth surfaces which cannot be equated with nor is it similar to that of the claimed protruding and recess mating portions of the claimed invention.

Thus, in contrast to SUZUKI, in the claimed invention, the booster includes a valve body which has an annular attaching bead portion 34b airtightly attached to the valve cylinder and an expansion cylinder portion 34c extending in the axial direction from the attaching bead portion. An annular valve portion communicates with a forward end portion of the expansion cylinder portion and is opposed to the vacuum pressure introducing valve seat and the atmosphere introducing valve seat

so as to seat thereon. The attaching bead portion is tightly held between a pair of cylindrical holding portions 35Ab and 35Bb formed in a pair of valve holders attached to the valve cylinder. A cylindrical connecting portion 35Ac of the front holder is engaged with an outer circumference of an engaging portion 35Bc of a rear valve holder of the pair of valve holders. An annular recess portion 50 and an annular protruding portion 51 of the pair of cylindrical holding portions are arranged on circumferential surfaces and are elastically engaged with each other. A front valve holder 35A including a connecting portion 35Ac extends into a recess of the rear valve holder 35B having a forward facing open end, whereby the connecting portion 35Ac is positioned between the valve cylinder 10 and an engaging portion 35Bb of the rear valve holder 35B. These features are not shown in the reference applied by the Examiner.

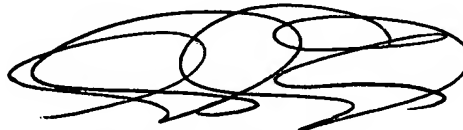
Applicants also submit that the Examiner does not appear to specifically consider dependent claims 13-18, as it relates to SUZUKI. In any event, Applicants submit that the features of claims 13-18 are also distinguishable over, for example, SUZUKI. In particular, SUZUKI contains no suggestion or showing of a recess portion and protruding portion being providing on the engaging faces of the components (claims 5 and 17). Instead, again, SUZUKI shows a different configuration. In such a configuration, one component engages a mating component, resulting in two surfaces of each component mating with two surfaces of the mating component.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 1-19 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicant hereby makes a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,
Shuuichi Yatabe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Calderon', with a stylized, cursive script.

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